

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 185435

71

ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 PC-04 EB-11 USIE-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

ACDA-19 IO-13 /144 R

DRAFTED BY DCLARE:ARA-LA/CEN

SEPTEMBER 18, 1973 EXTENSION 20883

APPROVED BY DAVID LAZAR:ARA/CEN

----- 127524

O R 182106Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 185435

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, US, GA

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH RIOS MONTT

REF: GUATEMALA 4458

SUMMARY: RIOS MONTT TOLD CEN OFFICERS THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS OFFERED BY GUATEMALAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DCG). ACCEPTANCE RESULTED FROM ASSURANCES THAT PRESIDENT CARLOS ARANA HAD NO OBJECTION AND PERSONAL VISIT FROM RENE DELEON DURING WHICH RIOS SAID THAT HE ATTRACTED TO DCG PHILOSOPHY BUT WAS NOT PARTY MEMBER AND WOULD NOT BE PARTISAN CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY

1. BRIGADIER EFRAIN RIOS MONTT REQUESTED CEN OFFICERS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 185435

PEZZULLO AND CLARE MEET WITH HIM AT INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE

COLLEGE OFFICE AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 17. ALTHOUGH RIOS BEGAN CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT HE WANTED VIEWS OF "DISINTERESTED OBSERVERS" BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT DCG PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, OBVIOUSLY HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO ACCEPT.

2. TIMING OF NOMINATION MAY HAVE CAUGHT RIOS BY SURPRISE, AS HE ALLEGED, BUT HE STATED THAT HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY DCG SOME TIME BEFORE AND AGREED TO ACCEPT CANDIDACY IF BOTH CARLOS SAGUSTUME AND RENE DE LEON WOULD STEP DOWN. RIOS SAID THAT DE LEON HAD VISITED HIM PREVIOUS SUNDAY (SEPTEMBER 16) TO PERSONALLY EXPLAIN HIS POSITION AND TO OUTLINE DCG

POSTURE. DE LEON CONVINCED RIOS MONTT THAT SAGASTUME WOULD NOT STEP ASIDE BUT THAT MAJORITY OF PR LEADERSHIP AND PARTY BASES WOULD SUPPORT HIS CANDIDACY. DE LEON REPORTEDLY MENTIONED HIS INTEREST IN BECOMING VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE; RIOS SAID HE WAS PARRIED BY STATING THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT DCG SPONSORSHIP BUT NOT ITS CONTROL. THOUGH HE AGREED WITH SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF DCG (INDEED, HE INDICATED THAT HE WAS ATTRACTED TO DCG BECAUSE IT WAS PART OF A WORLD-WIDE POLITICAL MOVEMENT) HE WAS NOT A PARTY MEMBER AND WOULD NOT AGREE TO RUN SOLELY AS PARTY STANDARD BEARER. HIS CAMPAIGN WOULD NOT BE PARTISAN IN STRICT PARTY SENSE BUT WOULD SEEK TO DRAW SUPPORT FROM ALL SECTORS IN SOCIETY THAT WANTED RETURN TO MORAL GOVERNMENT AND FAIRER SHARE OF FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID HE TOLD DE LEON THAT IF HE WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN GOOD OF COUNTRY RATHER THAN PERSONAL ADVANTAGE HE WOULD BECOME MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

3. RIOS ALLEGED THAT ONLY CONDITION HE HAD ATTACHED TO ACCEPTING NOMINATION WAS PERMISSION OF PRESIDENT ARANA. RIOS SHOWED CEN OFFICE CABLE FROM DCG SECRETARY-GENERAL BARILLAS WHICH STATED THAT ARANA HAD NO OBJECTION. RIOS SAID HE HAD TELEPHONED GENERAL RUBIO THAT MORNING AND, RUBIO HAD SPOKEN WITH ARANA CONFIRMING THAT PRESIDENT HAD NO OBJECTION. NEXT EVENT AFTER ACCEPTING NOMINATION, WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD DO DURING TELEPHONE CALL LATER IN DAY, WAS TO MEET WITH DELEGATION, PRESUMABLY COMPOSED OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 185435

DCG AND PR LEADERS, WHICH WOULD COME TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES.

4. RIOS ATTRIBUTED HIS NOMINATION IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE SCARE THAT COLONEL ENRIQUE PERALTA HAD CREATED AMONG VARIOUS SECTORS. RIOS RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT ARANA SUPPORTED NOMINATION AS PART OF PLAN TO BLOCK PERALTA'S ASPIRATIONS. NONETHELESS HE BELIEVED THAT GUATEMALAN

PEOPLE "DESERVED A REAL ALTERNATIVE" WHICH RIOS COULD PROVIDE. HE DID NOT BELIEVE HIS CANDIDACY WOULD DIFFICULTIES WITHIN ARMED FORCES, INASMUCH AS MILITARY WOULD ASSUME ITS HISTORIC POSTURE OF UPHOLDING CONSTITUTION, INCLUDING REJECTING POPULAR CHOICE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, WITHOUT TAKING SIDES.

5. COMMENT: IN GENERAL, RIOS HANDLED CONVERSATION EFFECTIVELY. SPEAKING INTENSELY AND WITH GREAT APPARENT SINCERITY, HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A MAN WITH FEW CONFIDANTS AND NOT WIDELY KNOWN IN GUATEMALA, BUT A PERSON WHO WOULD MOVE BEYOND PLATITUDES AND OFFER HONEST GOVERNMENT WITH EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE BOTH URBAN AND RURAL EMPLOYMENT. AT THE SAME TIME CEN OFFICERS

WERE STRUCK BY RIOS' APPARENT POLITICAL NAIVETE. EARLIER IN DAY, FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD ASKED PEZZULLO IF HE COULD COME TO DEPARTMENT TO MAKE TELEPHONE CALL TO ARANA ON "DEPARTMENT'S DIRECT LINE"; DURING AFTERNOON CONVERSATION HE SUGGESTED THAT USG PROVIDE HIM WITH LIST OF KNOWLEDGEABLE GUATEMALANS UPON WHOM HE COULD RELY FOR ADVICE. WHETHER SUCH REQUEST MADE INNOCENTLY (AS IS PROBABLE) OR SLYLTY (WHICH IS POSSIBLE), THEY REVEALED LACK OF POLITICAL ACUMEN.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THESE AND SIMILAR QUERIES, DEPARTMENT OFFICERS STATED USG WELCOMED FREE PLAY OF LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND VIEWED ELECTORAL PROCESS AS SIGNIFICANT EVENT WHEREVER TAKING PLACE. RIOS WAS OFFERED BRIEFING ON USG POLICIES PARTICULARLY IN ECONOMIC FIELD.

GDS

RUSH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE185435
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LA/CEN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS CLARE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730926/aaaaatfg.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: GUATEMALA 4458
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <01 MAR 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH RIOS MONTT
TAGS: PINT, US, GA
To: GUATEMALA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005